



SECRET [redacted]
THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: NOV 2004

28 October 1997

(b) (1)
(b) (3)

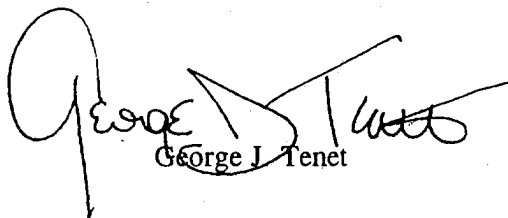
MEMORANDUM FOR: [redacted]

FROM: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: [redacted] Results of Special Panel Meeting
on Novaya Zemlya Test Site

[redacted] As you know, I commissioned a special panel to provide an independent assessment of what occurred in the Novaya Zemlya test site area last August. The panel met on Friday, 24 October. Attached are their findings. There are three main points that I have drawn from their conclusions:

- The 16 August seismic event, which occurred approximately 130 kilometers southeast of the test site itself, was not nuclear in nature, and was almost certainly not associated with the activities at Novaya Zemlya.
- There is strong evidence that nuclear-weapons related experiments were performed [redacted] August. The panel noted that experiments such as these, where the yield is below our detection threshold, have significant ramifications for CTBT compliance monitoring. They also noted that improved information sharing and transparency is essential for a zero-yield CTBT.
- The Intelligence Community's analysis and process is sound.


George J. Tenet

SECRET [redacted]

~~SECRET~~

COPY OF RECORD

10/24/97

Review of Activity and Events Related to the Russian Nuclear Test Site on
Novaya Zemlya

WHAT HAPPENED

US intelligence systems [redacted]
indicated a high level of activity at the Novaya Zemlya (NZ) test range during the
summer of 1997. [redacted]

[redacted] nuclear weapons related experiments
were performed [redacted] August. [redacted]

At the same time two seismic events were observed by regional arrays on
16 August separated by about four hours. The second one was [redacted] smaller,
but with the identical signature structure indicating it to be of the same source. The
centroid of the region was located in the Kara Sea some 130 km southeast of the test
area. Subsequently, available data leads to a firm conclusion that the site of the seismic
activity is offshore and, therefore, is almost certainly not associated with the activities at
NZ. [redacted]
[redacted]

PROCESS

The Intelligence Community has had requirements to rapidly report nuclear tests
to the policymakers. Timelines are relatively short (hours) and are dependent on rapid
analysis procedures and pre-existing intelligence. [redacted]

The seismic event on 16 August triggered a process that worked in many
respects as it should within the monitoring community. Given the brief reporting times
and limited data, the association of the seismic event with a nuclear test at NZ was
sound. Until [redacted] became unambiguously centered in the Kara Sea, the
Intelligence Community needed to act with the emphasis and dispatch associated with a
subkiloton nuclear test at the NZ site. [redacted]

A problem arises when such an issue passes from monitoring to verification, that
is, it enters the policy arena. This is especially true for the CTBT environment that
pushes detection and identification to unprecedented levels of challenge. [redacted]

[redacted]

~~SECRET~~

CL BY: [redacted]

CL REASON: SEC. 1.5C

DECL ON: X1

DRD FROM: 19-82

~~SECRET~~

IMPLICATIONS FOR TREATY

This incident demonstrates the difficulty of assessing weapons experiments or tests in the subkilotons range or below. It is likely that additional anomalies will occur, some of them with far less data.

This problem is emphasis the importance to the US and Russians in developing a common understanding of the treaty terminology as it relates to what is prohibited and what is allowed.

Regardless of the type of experimentation conducted at NZ in August,

CONCLUSION

1 - The seismic event is not nuclear

2 - The analysis process was sound, but policy statements need to recognize an appropriate degree of uncertainty.

3 - The importance of improved information exchange and transparency with the Russians is essential for a verifiable "zero-yield" CTBT.

Eugene Herrin
Eugene Herrin

Sidney Drell

~~SECRET~~

Review of Activity and Events Related to the Russian Nuclear Test Site on
Novaya Zemlya

WHAT HAPPENED

US intelligence systems [redacted] indicated a high level of activity at the Novaya Zemlya (NZ) test range during the summer of 1997. [redacted] nuclear weapons related experiments were performed [redacted] August.

[redacted] two seismic events were observed by regional arrays on 16 August separated by about four hours. The second one was [redacted] smaller, but with the identical signature structure indicating it to be of the same source. The centroid of the region was located in the Kara Sea some 130 km southeast of the test area. Subsequently, available data leads to a firm conclusion that the site of the seismic activity is offshore and, therefore, is almost certainly not associated with the activities at NZ. [redacted]

PROCESS

The Intelligence Community has had requirements to rapidly report nuclear tests to the policymakers. Timelines are relatively short (hours) and are dependent on rapid analysis procedures and pre-existing intelligence.

The seismic event on 16 August triggered a process that worked in many respects as it should within the monitoring community. Given the brief reporting times and limited data, the association of the seismic event with a nuclear test at NZ was sound. Until [redacted] became unambiguously centered in the Kara Sea, the Intelligence Community needed to act with the emphasis and dispatch associated with a subkiloton nuclear test at the NZ site.

A problem arises when such an issue passes from monitoring to verification, that is, it enters the policy arena. This is especially true for the CTBT environment that pushes detection and identification to unprecedented levels of challenge.

[redacted]
~~SECRET~~

IMPLICATIONS FOR TREATY

This incident demonstrates the difficulty of assessing weapons experiments or tests in the subkilotons range or below. It is likely that additional anomalies will occur, some of them with far less data.

This problem is emphasis the importance to the US and Russians in developing a common understanding of the treaty terminology as it relates to what is prohibited and what is allowed.

Regardless of the type of experimentation conducted at NZ in August, [REDACTED]

CONCLUSION

- 1 - The seismic event is not nuclear
- 2 - The analysis process was sound, but policy statements need to recognize an appropriate degree of uncertainty.
- 3 - The importance of improved information exchange and transparency with the Russians is essential for a verifiable "zero-yield" CTBT.

[REDACTED]

Eugene Herrin
Eugene Herrin

Sidney Drell

[REDACTED]
~~SECRET~~